

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-11 CIEP-03 COME-00 TRSE-00 COA-02

INT-08 DLOS-07 L-03 CIAE-00 INR-11 NSAE-00 RSC-01

OMB-01 DRC-01 AGR-20 /083 W

----- 047963

P 060955Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4416

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TOKYO 11595

PASS ROBERT SCHONING, DIRECTOR, NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES
SERVICE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EFIS US JA

SUBJ: JAPANESE VIEW OF CONSERVATION PROBLEMS IN NORTH PACIFIC

REF: STATE 192187

SUMMARY: JAPANESE VIEWS ON CONSERVATION IN NORTH PACIFIC
MUST BE SEEN IN CONTEXT OF IMPORTANCE OF FISH AS FOOD
SOURCE, IMPORTANCE OF NORTH PACIFIC AS SUPPLY SOURCE AND
INFLUENCE AND INTERESTS OF JAPANESE FISHING INDUSTRY.
JAPANESE ARE CONSCIOUS OF AND CONCERNED ABOUT CONDITION OF
FISHERY RESOURCES BECAUSE VITALITY AND SURVIVAL OF JAPAN'S
FISHERIES DEPEND ON MAINTENANCE OF RESOURCES AT LEVELS PER-
MITTING GREATEST YEILD. HOWEVER, JAPANESE CONSIDER US
VIEWS ON CONSERVATION UNDULY RESTRICTIVE, PARTICULARLY IN
NORTH PACIFIC. DESPITE THIS DIFFERENCE IN APPROACH,
JAPANESE HAVE TAKEN NUMBER OF STEPS TO CONSERVE
RESOURCES AND, IN FACT, BELIEVE IN SOME CASES THEY HAVE
BORNE DISPROPORTIONATE SHARE OF BURDEN. WE CAN EXPECT
THAT US PROPOSALS FOR FURTHER REDUCTION IN JAPANESE
FISHING ACTIVITIES WILL MEET WITH JAPANESE RESISTANCE
AND WILL REQUIRE STRONG EVIDENCE OF NECESSITY IN INTEREST
OF PROTECTING RESOURCES. END SUMMARY.

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1. AS BACKGROUND OF CONSIDERATION OF JAPANESE VIEW OF CONSERVATION PROBLEMS IN NORTH PACIFIC, TWO IMPORTANT FACTS MUST BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT: TREMENDOUS DEPENDENCE OF JAPANESE ON FISH AS SOURCE OF FOOD AND IMPORTANCE OF NORTH PACIFIC AS SOURCE OF FISH.

(A) FISH CONSTITUTES 51 PERCENT OF JAPANESE ANIMAL PROTEIN CONSUMPTION. JAPANESE PER CAPITAL FISH CONSUMPTION IS 144 POUNDS ANNUALLY, COMPARED TO NEARLY 13 POUNDS IN THE U.S. CONSEQUENTLY, FISHING IS A BIG INDUSTRY IN JAPAN. LANDED VALUE OF FISH IS OVER \$3 BILLION; VALUE OF FISH AND FISH PRODUCTS SOLD IS PROBABLY THREE OR FOUR TIMES THAT AMOUNT.

(B) JAPANESE CONSIDER NORTH PACIFIC OCEAN TO BE VITAL TO SURVIVAL OF ITS FISHERIES. ABOUT 20 PERCENT OF TOTAL CATCH (ABOUT 2 MILLION MT OUT OF SLIGHTLY OVER 10 MILLION MT) IS TAKEN IN THOSE WATERS.

2. BECAUSE OF IMPORTANCE OF FISHING TO JAPAN'S ECONOMY, JAPANESE ARE MOST CONCERNED ABOUT CONDITION OF FISHERY RESOURCES, NOT ONLY IN NORTH PACIFIC BUT IN ALL OCEANS. IT IS CLEARLY RECOGNIZED THAT VITALITY AND SURVIVAL OF ITS FISHERIES DEPEND ON MAINTAINING RESOURCES AT LEVELS WHICH WILL PERMIT GREATEST YIELD. HOWEVER, JAPANESE CONSIDER U.S. APPROACH TO CONSERVATION PROBLEMS TO BE CONSERVATIVE AND UNDULY RESTRICTIVE, PARTICULARLY IN NORTH PACIFIC.

3. FEELING SEEMS TO EXIST AMONG SOME JAPANESE THAT U.S. CAN AFFORD TO TAKE RESTRICTIVE APPROACH IN NORTH PACIFIC, WHERE, WITH EXCEPTION OF HALIBUT, CRAB AND SALMON, U.S. DOES NOT HAVE SIGNIFICANT FISHERY. ON OTHER HAND, THEY BELIEVE U.S. TAKING FAR MORE RELAXED ATTITUDE RE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT ISSUES IN AREAS WHERE IT HAS LARGE INVESTMENT, E.G. EASTERN PACIFIC TUNA FISHERY.

4. ANOTHER FACTOR INFLUENCING JAPANESE OFFICIAL ATTITUDES IS PRESSURE BY JAPANESE FISHING INDUSTRY, WHICH HAS BEEN ROCKED WITH SOARING COSTS AND DECLINING SALES. INCREASED

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COSTS OVER PAST YEAR INCLUDE 300 PERCENT RISE IN VESSEL FUEL, 30 PERCENT IN WAGES, AND 200 PERCENT IN FISHING EQUIPMENT SUCH AS NETS AND FLOATS. ADDED TO THAT, CONSUMER RESISTANCE TO SHARPLY RISING FISH PRICES HAS ADVERSELY AFFECTED SALES, AND GOJ'S TIGHT MONEY POLICY HAS HINDERED FISHING INDUSTRY'S EFFORTS TO MODERNIZE OPERATIONS. UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES FISHING INDUSTRY CAN BE EXPECTED TO URGE GOJ TO HOLD FIRM AGAINST PROPOSALS

BY U.S. AND OTHERS WHICH WOULD LIMIT THEIR OPERATIONS
AND TEND TO DECREASE PROFITABILITY OF THEIR OPERATIONS.

5. INTERESTINGLY ENOUGH, ALTHOUGH ENVIRONMENTAL
CONCERNS ARE VERY STRONG IN JAPAN, PUBLIC INTEREST IN CONSER-
VATION OF FISHERIES RESOURCES HAS BEEN MINIMAL. THUS, JAPANESE
OFFICIAL VIEWS MORE REFLECTIVE OF INDUSTRY OPINION.

6. DESPITE THESE VARIOUS FACTORS MILITATING AGAINST
STRONG CONSERVATION POLICIES, JAPAN HAS, EITHER BY
AGREEMENT OR ON VOLUNTARY BASIS, ACCEPTED OR ADOPTED
MEASURES TO REDUCE FISHING PRESSURES ON CERTAIN STOCKS.
FOR EXAMPLE, JAPAN AGREED TO CLOSURE OF ITS WINTER
TRAWLING OPERATIONS IN CERTAIN SECTORS IN EASTERN
BERING SEA TO ACCOMMODATE U.S. CONCERN ON
HALIBUT. IN ADDITION, JAPAN VOLUNTARILY IMPLEMENTED
MEASURES TO REDUCE POLLOCK CATCH. QUESTIONS ARE NOW BEING
RAISED AMONG JAPANESE REGARDING THOSE ARRANGEMENTS SINCE
TRAWLING RESTRICTIONS TO PROTECT HALIBUT APPLY ONLY TO
JAPAN AND NOT TO OTHER COUNTRIES AND MEASURES TO PROTECT
POLLOCK BEING NEGATED BY LARGE INCREASE IN SOUTH KOREAN
AND SOVIET FISHING ACTIVITIES. THIS HAS GREATLY
RANKLED JAPANESE FISHING INDUSTRY.

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OMB-01 AGR-20 DRC-01 /083 W
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7. WE CAN THEREFORE EXPECT JAPAN TO RESIST U.S. PRO-
POSALS CALLING FOR FURTHER REDUCTION IN JAPANESE
FISHING EFFORT UNLESS WE CAN CONVINCE JAPANESE OF

NECESSITY OF IMPLEMENTING ADDITIONAL AND MORE
STRINGENT CONSERVATION MEASURES TO PROTECT RESOURCE.
FURTHERMORE, THOSE MEASURES SHOULD BE APPLICABLE TO
ALL NATIONS FISHING IN NORTH PACIFIC WITHOUT
DISCRIMINATION.

8. WITH RESPECT TO SALMON, U.S. GROSSLY
UNDERESTIMATED SIZE OF BRISTOL BAY SALMON RUN IN 1974.
BASED ON THOSE INITIAL ESTIMATES, U.S. AND JAPAN NEGOTIATED
COMPROMISE, BUT ONLY AFTER PROLONGED AND HEATED DISCUSSIONS
EXTENDING OVER PERIOD OF SIX MONTHS. SITUATION EXACERBATED
BY ALASKAN THREAT TO USE ECONOMIC SANCTIONS TO
COMPEL JAPAN TO ACCEPT U.S. DEMANDS. JAPAN FEELS IT HAS
ACTED RESPONSIBLY IN SEEKING TO RESOLVE WHAT THEN APPEARED
TO BE SERIOUS CONSERVATION PROBLEM AND IN ACCOMMODATING
U.S. DEMANDS, BUT NOT WITHOUT SOME SACRIFICE ON ITS PART.

9. VOLUNTARY SALMON MEASURES ADOPTED BY JAPAN IN WATERS WEST
OF ABSTENTION LINE (175 DEGREES WEST LONGITUDE) DURING
EARLY PART OF FISHING SEASON APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN
SUCCESSFUL IN REDUCING JAPANESE INTERCEPTION OF
ADULT BRISTOL BAY SALMON (ESTIMATED AT 275,000 FISH).
HOWEVER, DURING LATTER PART OF FISHING SEASON WHEN RE-
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STRICTIONS WERE NOT IN FORCE, JAPANESE SALMON FLEET
APPARENTLY TOOK LARGE QUANTITY OF IMMATURE BRISTOL
BAY SALMON (FISH THAT WILL SPAWN IN 1975),
ESTIMATED AT 568,000 FISH. SHOULD U.S. PLAN ON SEEKING
ADDITIONAL CONTROLS ON JAPAN'S SALMON FISHING OPERATIONS,
FOR EXAMPLE TO REDUCE INTERCEPTION OF IMMATURE FISH, JAPAN
CAN BE EXPECTED TO OPPOSE SUCH PROPOSALS AND CLAIM
THAT ITS HIGH SEAS FISHERY HAS NOT HAD AND DOES NOT HAVE
ANY SERIOUS EFFECT ON BRISTOL BAY STOCKS.

10. JAPAN APPEARS TO BE GREATLY RELIEVED THAT CARACAS LOS
CONFERENCE FAILED TO REACH AGREEMENT ON 200-
MILE ECONOMIC ZONE ISSUE. AT LEAST TEMPORARILY JAPAN HAS
A REPRIEVE AND ADDITIONAL TIME IN WHICH TO REVIEW SITUATION
BEFORE NEXT CONFERENCE. WE ANTICIPATE THAT AT THIS FALL'S BI-
LATERAL FISHERIES TALKS LOS ISSUES WILL LURK IN BACKGROUND AND
INFLUENCE JAPANESE POSTURE TO SOME EXTENT.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CONSERVATION, FISHING INDUSTRY, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION, NORTH PACIFIC
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 06 SEP 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: shawdg
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974TOKYO11595
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740247-0893
From: TOKYO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740966/aaaacefh.tel
Line Count: 216
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: STATE 192187
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: shawdg
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 30 JUL 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <30 JUL 2002 by shawdg>; APPROVED <05 MAR 2003 by shawdg>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: JAPANESE VIEW OF CONSERVATION PROBLEMS IN NORTH PACIFIC
TAGS: EFIS, US, JA
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005